

## Wishes on a Digital Falling Star

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## Wishes on a Digital Falling Star

Disclaimer : Not Mine. The End.

Notes: This takes place somewhere before the last battle with Piedmon. Definitely after everyone has been separated but before any of those eps take place. Joe hasn't left to find Matt either...he and Mimi are still wandering around together. Kari's better and you can assume that that group is camping outside somewhere.

Comments are always welcomed.

**\*\*Wishes on a Digital Falling Star\*\***

**\*\*By: Nicole Silverwolf\*\***

\_ "I'll toss my coins in the fountain\_

\_ Look for clovers in grassy lawns\_

\_ Search for shooting stars in the night\_

\_ Cross my fingers and dream on."\_

\_ -Tracy Chapman\_

The Digital world, while filled with its dangers, perils, evil and horrors is surprisingly beautiful. Even in the midst of the greatest war its inhabitants have ever witnessed its beauty can shine like a beacon for all those who look to it for strength.

Untouched oceans filled with nothing but digimon and plant life. Forests and creatures that have never known the horrors of logging or hunting that plague the world of man. And skies so clear and

unfettered by city lights and pollutants that even the furthest star's light cannot be muted.

Darkness has come here, far too often and far too much it seems. But the beauty remains--often in hiding--but it is there. On the rarest and most important of occasions it will show itself to those who need it most. Like it has tonight, for the sixteen souls who need it most.

\* \* \*

If he closed his eyes and really tried hard he could pretend he was home, in the park maybe, petting some stray dog's soft fur. The sun shining and kids playing a little ways off. Soccer maybe, and if it is, Tai and Sora are surely involved. They were absolutely crazy about the game. Joe smiled a little as he pictured it. Maybe if he woke up he would be there instead of here.

But that was a foolish dream.

Joe opened his eyes and looked down at Gomamon who twitched as he scratched at a slightly ticklish spot on the purple and white striped back. The dying embers of a fire and the remains of their meal greeted him first and when he extended his sight he could see Mimi curled with Palmon, both still awake but sitting quietly for once instead of chattering incessantly as they often did. OGREMON and Mimi's servant digimon sat on the other side in the fire-light bickering about something or other. Joe didn't really feel like getting involved.

"Joe!" the little digimon wriggled under his hand and turned laughing eyes up to face his partner. "You're tickling me!" he laughed and swatted at Joe's hand gently. "Cut it out...hehehehehehe!"

"Hmmm oh sorry Gomamon." Joe smiled slightly down at his friend and moved his hand to the top of his head and continued to scratch more carefully. Eventually the scratching lulled the digimon's head drowsily back down to where it had been resting on his knees stretched out in front of him.

Beyond the fire-light--where he could barely see--the trees took on a ghostly gray and black appearance. As he had mentioned earlier when they had stood near the border of this land, that unless you were a BIG fan of charcoal, this place was definitely monochromatic. It certainly fit the mood they were all in though.

Dark, dark and darker.

Ever since they had gotten back here. Nothing but death, destruction, failure and fighting for all of them. Matt had left, and Tai...well Joe wondered if he had gone off the deep end one too many times. His erratic and reckless behavior had Joe and Mimi worried, part of the reason they were both out here. Mimi too had surprised them all with her compassion for the digimon who had sacrificed themselves just so the eight of them could live to save the world. It was humbling, thinking about that kind of stuff. No one lives forever. The way Tai had just...brushed it off as if nothing had happened, as if they hadn't lost anything at all. But Joe remembered the look in Tai's eyes when Matt had started yelling at him. He had honestly looked hurt, and genuinely upset. It was all too confusing.

TK and Kari were little, their strength and joy had given everyone something to lock onto even during the worst. But even TK wasn't enough to keep Matt from leaving. Joe had been sure that it would have been enough--Matt adored his little brother--though he was loathe to admit it to the rest of them. But only a blind person would have missed it, and maybe even not then. Something was bothering Matt, maybe it was the same thing that was bothering Joe. But there was no doubt that the brooding and quiet teenager had something major on his mind. Sora was a rock as always: solid, compassionate, confident and loving. She was one of the few things that hadn't changed. She and Izzy seemed to be the only sources of stability left in the group.

Not even his supposed 'Reliability' had managed to stay intact. At least that was how Joe saw it. He couldn't be counted on regardless of the fact that he was the oldest, and next to Izzy considered the smartest of the eight of them. Not even his limited medical training was reliable. It hadn't saved Leomon had it?

Joe swallowed past the painful lump that had lodged itself in his throat and turned his glass-covered eyes to the huge canopy of bright stars that covered the velvet blanket the sky seemed like. Gomamon, sensing his friend's sadness leaned his head closer to Joe and turned solemn green eyes upwards to look at the stars.

Well at least he took some comfort in the fact that he was here, he recognized his problem and he wasn't going to stop until he figured out where he belonged and what he was being relied on for.

So Joe sat there, head upturned looking for the answers he knew weren't up there, yet somehow hoping they would be.

Mimi sat, back propped against the trunk of an enormous tree, her hat sitting next to her instead of on her head, and Palmon comfortably sitting on her lap. Dinner had been delicious and for a little while she could almost believe that they weren't fighting a war. Could almost believe that Piximon and Leomon and Whamon and the others weren't gone...hadn't sacrificed themselves. Oh sure they weren't really gone as Izzy and Tai had pointed out several times. But that wasn't really the point. They were gone and until the Dark Masters were defeated and Primary Village repaired they for all intents and purposes were gone.

Mimi hadn't really known what to expect when they returned to the digiworld on the trail of the Dark Masters. She supposed it would have been like before, when they had battled. Or maybe it would have been like the movies...where only the bad guy dies and the good guys always win. Well she had news for all those people who believed that was true.

War sucked. Big time.

And even though she knew that they were the only people who could stop the suffering they saw everywhere, she hated it. Hated the fighting, the shouting, the sick feeling of loss that didn't go away and probably never would.

She looked towards Joe who was staring up towards the sky with a searching expression on his face. And she hated being scared. Scared

that one of them would be killed, that Palmon or any of the digimon might be really injured in a battle. Scared that maybe this was some sort of horrible mistake--that maybe they weren't the digidestined. Prophecies were wrong sometimes. What if everything they had fought for and all the sacrifices made were in vain? What if it did nothing?

"Mimi?" Palmon asked, "whattsa matter?"

"Nothing Palmon, just thinking. It's ok." She finished sincerely when Palmon turned her green eyes carefully to her. Mimi gave a reassuring smile that made her look far older and more mature than ever as she turned upwards to catch the starlight.

She wasn't really watching the stars, her mind elsewhere--on home and on her friends and family. Until Joe's quiet, hushed voice broke through the night air.

"Hey Mimi, look--a shooting star! Make a wish, quick."

Mimi shot her eyes up and searched until she locked onto a bright light with a silvery shining tail on it. It was travelling slowly towards the surface and they were afforded a long look at it. A genuine wide smile crossed her face and she closed her eyes.

—

I wish for all this fighting to be over and for everyone to be ok.

—

"Joe?" Gomamon looked up scrutinizing the stars and picking up the odd looking one. Joe hadn't moved but he was sure that his human partner was listening. "What's a shooting star?"

Joe glanced away for an instant to look at the little purple and white digimon with a surprised expression. "A shooting star is a star that's falling to Earth or in this case the digiworld. Izzy can explain why better than I can but I know that they're pretty rare. You're supposed to make a wish on them. If you don't tell anyone it's supposed to come true."

"Oh. Are you gonna make a wish Joe?" the small digimon asked as he slid onto his haunches.

Joe nodded without taking his eyes off the star. "Yep."

—

I wish to be reliable so the others can count on me...especially Gomamon so we can save everyone here.

—

"Make a wish guys!" Mimi called to the two digimon sitting on their laps. The others who had been sitting around the fire with them were now fast asleep.

The two digimon looked up at each other then up to their respective

partners.

—

I wish to stay with Mimi forever.

I wish to stay with Joe forever.

—

The star fell below the tree line and they could no longer see it; could only remember the way it had looked.

"Did you make a wish Gomamon?" Joe asked as he pulled the digimon further up so that he was curled around him, his flippers wrapped lightly around the boy's chest but allowing him to turn and see the sky.

"Yep. I wished for you to stop snoring so loud at night!"

"HEY!"

"Well now it won't come true!" Palmon laughed as Mimi covered her mouth and bit her lip to keep from doing the same.

"Ughghgh!" Joe rolled his eyes and flopped back onto the medicine bag.

\* \* \*

Sora glanced up from the fire they were sitting by and called again. "IZZY!" she shouted.

A startled and somewhat confused set of brown eyes peaked up from over the top of a yellow ibook. The thin pineApple laptop sat balanced on his knees which were crossed Indian style under him. The owner of said knees was hunched over the top his eyes no more than a half a foot from the edge of the screen. His fingers up until a few moments ago had been clattering across the keyboard in a complicated dance only he and his digimon Tentamon seemed to understand.

"Yeah Sora...what's up?" he asked, in all innocence not realizing that his active curiosity had turned back towards the computer already.

"Dinner Izzy. C'mon time to eat!" ordered the unofficial leader of the group from the fireside. Tai's brown hair stood in every possible which way and his prized, oversized goggles were the only thing that kept it in some sort of order and away from his eyes. His little sister Kari sat next to him, quiet but smiling, holding a leaf filled with something that looked halfway edible for once. TK, Matt's little brother and the youngest of the group by about six months to Kari, sat on Tai's other side, smiling widely as he almost always did.

Patamon, the slightly bat-looking digimon sat on top of his head looking down at his dinner which sat next to the boy's. Gatomon, Kari's digimon, curled at her feet, her own meal of fish lying in front of her. The fire hissed and spat adding to the muted sounds of

the world around them. Izzy noticed for the first time that it was quite dark out, obviously a lot of time had passed since he sat down to work with his beloved device. Sora was holding out a plate to Izzy, her eyes incredulous and insisting. Biyomon sat holding Sora's plate for her next to Kari.

"C'mon silly! Can't believe you don't even remember to eat." She smiled until Izzy replied.

"Oh thanks Sora..." he smiled and took the 'plate' in his hands. The ibook was carefully closed and slipped into the pack Izzy always wore on his back. Tentamon buzzed up and landed nearer to the fire.

"OHHHHH I just love a good meal!" the nasal digimon exuded before digging into his own dinner.

"Hey where's Agumon?" TK mumbled from around some food.

"I'm sure he's around TK. Don't talk with your mouth full. Agumon can hunt for himself, he'll be fine."

As if on cue the small orange dinosaur wandered out from behind a bush not far away. Even in the fading light his bright orange skin stood out starkly against the grays and blacks which had infused themselves into everything around them.

"Hey guys!" Agumon greeted, waving a dangerous looking claw in their direction before jogging over and flopping down next to Tentamon.

"Hey Agumon...want some?" his partner asked holding out his plate towards him. A crooked half grin lit up his face and he gestured to the plate. "There's plenty left."

"No thanks Tai! I'm stuffed!"

The rest of the meal passed in companionable silence punctured occasionally by comments and laughter. Everyone was starving, including the oblivious Izzy and so they concentrated more on that than on talking.

The sky above them shaded first to brilliant oranges and reds then edged further and further to a thick, warm blue/black velvet color, so rich that one could wonder how it would feel between their fingers. Plentifully spread through this blanket of sky were diamonds. The kind that sparkled and could not be counted, that would never garner any measurable wealth for no one had ever been able to take them from their place in the heavens.

Izzy was returning to his work, scooting closer to the fire so as to see the screen better. He stretched out on his stomach legs swinging in idle patterns over his head. Elbows propping him up so that he could see the screen and type.

Ordered.

That was how his life was. To Izzy you could always break down everything into a mathematical equation or rational explanation. It was a comfortable normal that the boy liked.

Stable.

A puzzle to be neatly solved and answers to be neatly distributed to all those intelligent enough to ask the questions. After being shuffled from one place to another for some time after his parents gave him up for adoption he had craved the ordered answers that science and math provided. Even though he was no older than three or four.

Except there were questions that he still didn't know how science could solve. Why had his parents given him away in the first place? He loved his step-parents and would never consider the people who had bore him to be his family. But the mystery as to why he was given up for adoption drove him to look for answers in books and formulas. For what could possibly have made his birth parents give him away?

It wasn't something he obsessed over or even thought about all that much. But with the eight of them slowly breaking into smaller and smaller groups it got him to wondering. What exactly was going on? If he wanted to he could explain the mathematical improbability that they would survive and defeat Piedmon on their own without each other. It was the whole reason eight of them had been brought here instead of just one or two of them. But for once he had held his tongue. There wasn't a real chance that those so highly involved in it would listen to reason.

He knew that math was not the reason things were spiraling out of their hands.

Being the proclaimed 'computer geek' of the group, while it had led to being picked on in school, helped him to settle in with the digi-destined. He knew what he was supposed to do. Everyone looked to him when they didn't know the answer. And usually he could figure out said answer, using knowledge he had and had gained while here. His crest suited him perfectly.

Maybe that was why Matt and Joe and Mimi had left. Because they didn't know where they belonged.

Was that it?

Another puzzle to solve in time. That was what he planned to do, he knew it. All he wanted to do was solve things. He could and would never be satisfied until he knew all the answers. And Izzy was figuring that that would take a long time to accomplish. So he happily clattered away to himself, pondering the questions of the universe and the improbability of it all.

Sora turned her eyes idly upwards to view the stars. Even though she got to go camping once in a while, like the seven of them had, she still loved to look at the stars. She never got to do it often enough. In the city the lights often made it hard to see stars clearly. And when it rained there wasn't a chance to see anything, so she took every frivolous moment she could to enjoy their glow here in the digiworld.

It was nice to let down your guard once in a while she decided, a smile lighting her features. Her mind, never inactive wandered towards home, her family and the families they had all left behind.

There were times when she missed them so much. It was a lot harder being in charge. She had always thought it was hard being a kid. Now she could see that it was just as hard if not harder to be a parent. Something she sometimes felt like. Especially with TK and Kari around. They were so much younger than any of them were. She understood why Matt was so overprotective more than she had before.

Sure she wasn't as connected as he and TK were but she understood that feeling all the same. You could see it in them and in Tai and Kari too. Like now, she thought looking at the two of them sitting by the fire. She had heard Tai talking quietly for several minutes but since it wasn't about anything that seemed important she had tuned him out.

Now she looked with renewed interest at her friend and leader and her smile broke into a grin. Tai sat on the ground, Kari on his lap, eyes rapt on him and the stars above while the boy related a story. His voice rose and fell in time with his characters, and his hands swung out and around illustrating and drawing his audience into the story even further. Absolute trust and adoration shone from the eyes--the girl seemed so young. Young enough to believe in fantastic stories and super hero brothers, once upon a times and happily ever afters.

TK sat next to Tai, feet crossed and wide blue eyes taking in every word of the story being told. Patamon, equally as rapt an audience perched on the boy's head, leaning forward so that TK's hat slid forward and nearly covered his eyes. Gatomon and Agumon were both sitting and listening as well, eyes as alight as the children half their age. Tai had a definite talent for storytelling it seemed.

Sora had to smile even wider at that. TK while still young was as wrapped up in the story as Kari and Patamon were. But there was a sort of isolatedness about him. \_Was that even a word?\_ she wondered. It seemed to fit though. He sat alone, just a little ways from Tai and Kari but it was a deliberate thing--like he knew that he couldn't really be a part of that. There was a longing look in his eyes. Like he knew what he was missing. He probably did.

Suddenly the scene wasn't as carefree as it was before. A long shaky sigh later Sora turned from them all and looked up to the stars. Biyoman fluffed her wings and sat next to her digi-destined partner. Things were really complicated when you were in charge too she noted. \_Wonder if Joe ever felt like this?\_ It was odd where a train of thought headed sometimes.

Certainly their oldest member must have felt some of this responsibility before they had gotten there. Joe held the crest of reliability and that was something that Sora knew they needed. While Tai was impulsive and courageous, Matt careful but no less brave, Izzy brave but sometimes oblivious, Joe was perhaps the most level headed of them all. For all his clumsiness and scaredy-cat behavior he was dedicated and if he decided something, with the truest conviction, he wouldn't stop until he found the truth.

Who could have forgotten the Bakumon that he had helped to defeat? Sora was willing to admit that she hadn't thought much of Joe's plan to meditate, focus and 'will' the power from the ghost. He was really



scared and she would have thought he would fold. He hadn't and Sora had gained a new respect for him that night. \_I wonder where they are tonight. I hope they're safe.\_

A faint light and movement in the inky black sky was all that preceded its coming. And Sora was the first to pick it up.

"Hey look everyone!"

Tai stopped at the outburst from his friend and Izzy froze in mid-type. TK and Kari whipped their heads to look at her through the fire in the dim light it provided. The digimon froze as one and looked questioningly at the red-head.

"A shooting star!" she finished, never taking her eyes from the beautiful sight. Her elbows rested on her knees brought up under her. The silver tail was impressive and only added to the sparkle that lit the sky.

Various 'ohs', 'ahs' and 'wows!' rose from everyone. Even Izzy seemed impressed.

"Prodigious! A meteor or a comet or a real star! This is absolutely amazing!" the young computer whiz turned temporary astronomer enthused.

"Tai?" a certain orange digimon asked for the group that seemed in the dark about the significance of such a phenomena.

"Yeah Agumon?" Tai responded somewhat distractedly as he gazed upwards.

Sending a quick glance to the other confused digimon he asked.

"What's a shooting star?"

Before Tai could speak past his surprise Izzy jumped in, for once without speaking in terms that only he and Tentamon could understand.

"Well there are tons of scientific explanations available for the phenomena of a 'shooting star' but I learned when I was young that if you make a wish on a falling star then it would come true. You can't tell anyone what you've wished for or it won't come true." He finished matter-of-factly.

"Quick everyone make a wish! You too guys!" Sora gestured to their digimon.

The star moved quietly along its path as ten wishes flew towards it with deep convictions and heartfelt hope they would come true.

—

I wish that I get a chance to try and solve every problem in the world.

I wish that Matt and Joe and Mimi and the Numemon and all our friends are safe.

I wish to stay with Izzy forever!

I wish to stay with Kari forever!

I wish to stay with Sora forever!

I wish to stay with Tai forever!

I wish to stay with TK forever!

—

Five wishes were sent off almost simultaneously from the various digimon.

—

I wish that everyone of us gets home safe and sound.

—

I wish...I wish for my brother Matt to come back. We all need him and I need him cause he's my big brother.

—

Tai watched the star as it descended beyond their view. A silver trail glinted ghostly shades as it faded from beautiful reality to treasured memory. Silence filled their campsite as they sat there, simply enjoying the moment.

A slight movement and a loud but stifled yawn escaped his younger sister and broke the spell of the moment.

Tai looked down adoringly at the little girl.

"Tired Kari?" he asked quietly.

"Nooooo," Kari protested, the rest of what she was going to say cut with another huge yawn. Her eyelids drooped dangerously and Tai smiled.

"Sure you are kid," he smiled gently and took in TK who was valiantly trying to sit up and look and act awake. Izzy and Sora looked tired as well as they both caught the contagious yawning their young friends were taking off with.

"I think it's time for bed guys," Sora said as she rolled over and laid down. For a moment she moved towards Tai but he smiled and nodded that he could handle it. Biyomon curled up over her and smiled at her friend.

"Sora's got a good point. We need all the rest we can get if we're going to defeat Piedmon." Izzy stated as he shut down his laptop for the night.

"I agree," Tentamon put in and curled next to Izzy, lying like a dog over its master's feet.

"C'mon Kari," Tai called as he slid her off his lap and laid her down next to him. Gatomon sauntered over, and Kari smiled, eyes opening wide as she held her hands outstretched for the small cat-like digimon.

The blue eyed creature happily curled up in the little girl's embrace, lending warmth to her.

"Hey Gatomon, did you make a wish?" Kari asked drowsily.

"Yep I did." She replied.

"Good," the girl pronounced happily. "G'night Tai. G'night guys."

"Night Kari. Night guys," the others chimed from where they lay around the fire.

"Night Kari," her brother whispered close to her ear. He didn't know whether she heard her though. She was fast asleep, her breathing becoming deeper with every breath.

Much as he wanted to just curl up and drift off as well he knew he had one more responsibility for the night. Turning to the other side he stopped dead at the sight of Matt's little brother. Huddled in a ball, he was trying very hard not to show that he was crying. Eyes were squeezed shut and the boy had his hands in fists clutched close to his chest. TK looked more miserable and alone than he had ever looked before and the sight bothered Tai more than he thought it could have. But then again he was a brother, he knew where it was coming from at least. That instinct was one thing that he would never ever neglect.

Patamon sat sadly watching the boy. Apparently whatever he had tried to say to calm or reassure him had failed miserably. The young bat-like digimon turned his head up to their leader and bit his lip, a plea written in his eyes.

Agumon smiled as he sat down next to Patamon and spoke in quiet tones that Tai couldn't hear.

Tai for all his bravado and courage wasn't sure what to do, and almost shrank back because of it. But one look into the tear stricken face shattered any wall he had built up.

"Hey TK...hey," he spoke softly as he pulled the boy up next to him so he was sitting and leaning on Tai's side. "What's wrong huh?"

TK, who was at times often over-worried about proving how brave he was and how much he was not a crybaby looked up. His huge blue eyes, so like his older brother's met Tai's gentle, concerned brown ones and held them. The child spoke after a long moment his voice quiet and rough with tears.

"Why did Matt leave us? Does he not care about us anymore?" The unspoken 'does he hate me?' was clear as well although the child did not utter one of his deeper fears.

Tai swallowed hard and looked up to the stars. He begged for guidance in that instant. But finding answers was not that easy and so he did

the best he could and spoke from the heart.

"Of course he cares about us TK!" he tried to put all his conviction and belief into the truth he hoped he was speaking. "He's just trying to figure some stuff out right now. I think that he had to go away for a while to find it. Do you think that he would have saved us from Puppetmon if he didn't care?" he laughed slightly, trying to pass it off as a light argument.

"No." TK said quietly leaning a little further towards Tai. The older boy would forever remember the next thing the boy said. It was probably one of the most courageous things he had ever seen a person do, let alone an eight year old. He voiced his deepest fear. "Do you think he doesn't care about me anymore Tai?"

The boy being questioned didn't even hesitate an instant in his reply.

"No TK. No, Matt loves you so much. He cares about you and looks out for you and he would die for you. You have to believe that TK. Please? Please believe your brother loves you. He'll come back. I promise."

Tai didn't even realize that he was hugging the boy until he felt the tears on his shirt. Stiffening for the tiniest fraction of a second he pulled TK into his lap like Kari and let the child cling to him, crying out all the frustration, fear and misery that had hung around him since Matt had disappeared. He almost didn't hear the question when it came.

"Then why did he leave?"

Tai's shaky breath belied his I-know-all-the-answers attitude. "I dunno TK. I think he didn't want to hurt anyone anymore especially you and he was afraid he might do that if he stayed. So maybe he went away to try and figure it out." He wasn't sure it was the right answer or the answer TK needed. But he was trying his best.

"What if he's dead?" The question was frank, to the point and possibly quieter than the last one. TK looked up to meet Tai's eyes in order to determine if his leader was lying. Tai forced himself to meet the gaze of the child.

"He's a big guy TK. I'm sure he's just fine. He's got Gabumon with him too so he's probably doing great. Besides he's gotta show you how play a harmonica, and how to drive a car, and see you graduate from school and become a rich and famous and handsome guy."

TK sniffed through his smile and wiped the tears from his eyes. "You think so?"

"I know so," Tai smiled and wiped a few tears away that the kid had missed. At that TK leapt into his arms and hung on fiercely. The force of the return hug was just as strong.

The crying had exhausted the already tired young boy and his blue eyes already had shutters slowly covering them.

"Ok, think you can sleep now?"

"Yeah," the little boy slid off of Tai's lap and curled on the ground, where Patamon landed on his head.

Sleepy eyes watched Tai as he shifted Agumon over from where he was sleeping so that he covered most of TK.

"Promise?"

Tai looked at him for a long moment an odd concerned and solemn look entering his usually carefree eyes.

"Yeah TK. I promise." He choked out in a whisper as the child drifted peacefully off into the dream world.

Tai sat back and laced his fingers through his wild brown hair as the impact of what he had just promised hit him. There was no way that he could promise that Matt wasn't hurt. He and the others had often pondered the same question out of TK and Kari's ear shot.

With a determined and desperate stare he bore his brown eyes into the light coming from above and begged/whispered his wish again to the stars above.

—

Matt, he misses you so much. I wish you were here to take care of him and prove how much you love him. Don't make me have to go back on that promise! Gods I don't think I could stand it if I had to.

—

He didn't realize that he had lain down and was rapidly approaching sleep until it had almost overtaken him. His last view was of the stars that carpeted the sky as he rolled over and pulled his sister close to give her warmth. And the stars walked on.

\* \* \*

There wasn't any reason to light a fire for he wasn't hungry or cold. So he sat in the darkness on the bank of the lake or river or whatever it was and let the stars and moon do the work of a fire. A lone digimon sat next to the boy looking every bit like a faithful dog.

Young Matt Ishida's eyes were shuttered as he focused on listening to the music that he was playing, feeling the notes before they came and filling the night air with the mournful tune. If one were to listen they would realize that it came from the depths of his soul for it was sad and alone sounding.

Eventually the song ended, whether by the design of the composer's emotions or by the composer's conscious decision could not be determined. The treasured harmonica was lowered slightly and Matt looked up--a fierce, desperate stare focusing on some unseen place just over the harmonica's horizon.

The lake was quiet and the slightest lapping on the shore and the rustling of leaves from the light breeze were all that could be heard.

Light blue eyes bored into the ground or water but his mind was miles away. Back to a battle and a wooden nightmare that had started this whole thing.

He couldn't move, couldn't get out, couldn't do anything.

All he could do was watch and beg his little brother, the only person that could remind him of the good in everything, not to go with Puppetmon. He knew what the digimon was planning, he knew it! He was going to kill him. Kami, that monster was gonna kill his little brother! He was supposed to protect him! And he was just lying there!

—

I don't matter TK. Please! Don't do this please! You're the only one who matters please. He's gonna kill you. Run please! Just get outta here.

—

But TK only turned to look at him for a long moment. Until that moment Matt had never realized how alike they really looked. Same blonde hair and blue eyes, and a general air of brotherhood surrounded them both.

The emotions that were visible in his eyes were unreadable to Matt but he got the gist. He never heard what TK asked Puppetmon or the response that he gave. All he knew was that his little brother had agreed. The boy climbed to his feet, proving to himself that he was braver than even he suspected. One last look from his brother was all that he could give before he was forced to follow the Dark Master who held his brother's life in his hands. In more ways than one.

—

You're not supposed to die for me! Matt screamed as if stuck inside a deep cell of a prison too far away for anyone to take notice or hear.

—

As if by its own volition Matt's hands tightened around the thin metal harmonica still near his mouth. And in one swift movement he stood and threw it down the beach, not caring where it fell or if it did.

The sudden movement startled Gabumon and he abruptly stood and backed away further towards the forest as the boy hurtled the small metal object down the sandy shoreline.

"Matt? What is the matter?"

As fast as the adrenaline and anger had welled up inside of him, they drained and were gone. The boy simply slumped back down to the ground and drew his knees up around him again. Gabumon laid a furry paw on the young man's shoes and looked at him until he would answer.

The answer when it came was filled with guilt, self-loathing and

regret.

"I'm what's the matter. All I ever do is make things worse. I pushed everyone away and I couldn't even make you digivolve. And then when I could I had you almost destroy Wargreymon and almost killed Tai... I almost killed somebody..." The weight of that settled over him as if he were just realizing the horror of what he had almost done.

"And I couldn't even protect TK! He doesn't need me anymore. He took care of himself just fine. He didn't need me. What if I hurt him huh?" he suddenly turned painful, panic filled eyes up to meet the deep red of the digimon's. "What if I hurt my little brother!" he nearly shouted.

The digimon looked genuinely upset and bit at his bottom lip before answering.

"Do you love TK?" he asked first.

"Of course I do. I'd die for him." Matt answered, astonished that his digimon could think otherwise.

"Then how could you hurt him?" came the quiet question.

"I...I..."

Matt could not find an answer and swallowed hard. For the first time that night and nearly since he had left the others he allowed himself to look up to the stars that shone down from above. The immense emptiness of it all made him shiver in spite of himself. While the stars were beautiful no doubt they sometimes served to prove to Matt how truly alone and insignificant he was.

He stared for the longest time, his eyes not really seeing the pinpricks of light, his mind working overtime coming up with ways to further condemn himself for every mistake that he had ever committed.

Gabumon, concern written on his every feature had backed off. Sitting next to his troubled friend and partner he turned his warm red eyes upwards to watch the sky as well.

After a long while spent simply sitting, Matt caught sight of something that somewhat snapped him out of his reverie. A bright point of light and a streaming tail of cosmic dust crossed the sky and moved slowly towards the earth below.

"Hey a shooting star!" he spoke and the sound echoed against the darkness and silence which had formerly reigned.

Gabumon looked at the odd-looking falling star and then back at the partner who had been silent but a moment ago. It must be something of importance to have roused the boy from the near catatonic state he had been in. But for the life of him he couldn't figure out what a falling star had to do with anything.

"Uh Matt?"

"Yeah..." he answered distractedly eyes still fixed on the

star.

"What is the importance of a shooting star?" he asked in his slight accent and formal speech.

Matt smiled at that. A ghost of a smile but a smile none the less that held through his entire explanation.

"A shooting star's rare. They say if you wish on one and don't tell anyone what you wished for it will come true."

"Do you believe that?"

"I guess so," the smile faded at that, replaced again by the grim features that had become nearly permanent on the boy. They made him look older, far older than he should look.

"I think I will make a wish. Will you?" Gabumon asked in all sincerity.

Matt thought about it for a second before answering. "Sure it can't hurt."

—

I wish to stay with Matt forever...the real Matt, the one he hides even from himself.

—

I wish...I'm wishing for TK. For him to stay safe and to go home and to know that I will always love him. I wish I could be with him right now.

—

Matt bit his lip hard at that, embarrassed that he was actually near tears. With a supreme effort, he managed to contain them and pull his stoic mask semi-back in place. The star's trail faded away and was gone as if it had never been.

He looked off towards the horizon towards the island out there that seemed to call him like a siren. He suddenly knew where to go and started to explain rapidly.

"I just...I can't stay here. I've gotta figure this out. I...I just have to keep going till I figure it out. You don't have to come Gabumon." He looked down smiling to the digimon who looked back.

"Matt, I am your friend and I will stay with you until the end of this journey. How will we cross this river?"

A smile again barely graced the boy's features before leaving again.

"There's a boat over there. I think I saw it earlier. If it floats I guess we can use it."

The boy walked down the beach, a digimon at his side and a slight



hope guiding him along the way. A metal instrument lay half-buried in the sand about fifteen meters away from where they had been sitting. The star's trail long gone from the sky would remain in their memories though. And the stars marched onwards to morning.

\* \* \*

\_Owari\_

So Comments, criticisms, flames, praise...anything you'd like to throw at me?

Please do so now.

Thanks for reading!

End  
file.